

STEWKLEY TENNIS CLUB – CHAIRMAN’S REPORT – AGM 2020

2020 has been an unprecedented year for all of us, and the same is true of Stewkley Tennis Club.

In the first two months of the year when things were “normal”– club sessions were well supported, the men’s and women’s teams were making good progress in their respective leagues and at the end of February our first fundraising/social event of the year – a bingo night – had just taken place, raising more than £250 for club funds.

Then on March 23, the announcement of the first national lockdown because of the spread of coronavirus meant the courts were closed until further notice.

As restrictions were gradually eased, the club was in a position on May 15 to reopen the courts albeit for singles play only – a format the majority of our members were probably less familiar playing!

In the middle of June, the club was able to allow doubles play and at the end of August club sessions were able to resume.

The tennis league seasons that were halted in March were completed in August and September with the ladies team achieving promotion and the men’s team finishing in a solid mid-table position in their division.

The current winter league seasons did begin in September but were suspended in early November, when the courts had to be closed again following the introduction of the second national lockdown.

It appears the club will be in a position to reopen the courts in early December which is very welcome news as I am sure we are all missing playing tennis.

During the period between lockdowns the club managed to increase its membership, as tennis was one of the first leisure activities able to take place following the first lockdown.

Although it has been a difficult year for all of us, the opportunity to play tennis when it has been possible has hopefully provided members with fresh air and exercise which has helped maintain physical and mental health.

The chance to play tennis has also provided members with some company, friendship and a little bit of escapism from everything else that has been going on.

I would like to thank the committee – Jeremy, Phil, Kris, George, Rob and Malcolm for all their support over the past year and thank our coach Matt Evans and his team for their continued work for Stewkley Tennis Club.

It is impossible to know at this time what 2021 will bring, but hopefully next year everyone will be able to continue playing tennis and all being well the club will continue to thrive despite the challenging circumstances. Thank you.